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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000512

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, EAP/RSP; NSC FOR E. PHU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KCOR](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: ALLEGED EAST JAVA VOTER FRAUD SPARKS NATIONAL CONCERNS

REF: A. JAKARTA 00479

[1](#)B. SURABAYA 10 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph L. Novak, reasons 1.4(b+d).

[1](#)1. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate General Surabaya.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: Accusations of widespread voting fraud in East Java's recent gubernatorial elections are sparking concerns about the credibility of the upcoming national legislative elections, scheduled for April 9. On March 19, retired East Java Police Chief Herman told the DCM--and has alleged publicly--that national police headquarters put a stop to his team's criminal investigation into the alleged fraud.

[1](#)3. (C) SUMMARY (Con'd): In particular, the spotlight has fallen on President Yudhoyono's Partai Demokrat (PD), which was the main support behind the winning East Java gubernatorial candidate. There is no evidence connecting the President to any fraud, but it could potentially impact his re-election campaign. END SUMMARY.

CONCERNS GROW ABOUT EAST JAVA CHARGES

[1](#)4. (C) Allegations of voting fraud in a recent gubernatorial race are sparking worry in Indonesia. Concerns about voting fraud in East Java, mounting since last year's November gubernatorial elections, peaked this week with former police official Herman's allegations that Jakarta Police Headquarters interfered with his investigations into fraud. Herman--who asked for the meeting--told the DCM on March 19 that his suspicions of continued irregularities in the re-run of the East Java elections in January grew when his officers detained several children attempting to vote under false names. A coalition candidate who was backed by PD, Sukarwo (one name only) won the election by just 34,104 votes.

[1](#)5. (C) Herman claims to have found 29,948 falsified names of a sample from 368 polling stations (600 voters per station) in the two regions conducting the re-run election. The police discovered that the falsified names were spread out regionally through a computerized system, which made it difficult to detect at the polling sites. With sufficient evidence, the police investigators raised the investigation to the level of a criminal case. However, in what Herman claims was an unusual move, Jakarta Police Headquarters stepped in, stopped the investigation, and transferred Herman, due to retire in June, to Jakarta. Herman decided to speak out, he said, only upon learning that his replacement had agreed to downgrade the criminal investigation.

[1](#)6. (C) Herman is well-respected in East Java and by Mission for his cooperation on Surabaya Consulate security, TIP,

Cybercrime, and other ICITAP programs. The Independent Commission for the Election Observer (KIPP) gave him a courageous dissent award March 20 for his public calls to resume the criminal investigation of the fraud. He was also part of a small group chosen to participate in a rule of law trip to the U.S. with Ambassador Hume in 2008. Nonetheless, some East Java pundits have implied that he has political motivations and that he may have decided to come forward after PD denied him a position.

#### POTENTIAL NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS?

17. (C) Herman's charges have been widely publicized. The question now is whether they might in any way impact the April legislative elections or the July presidential election. Most of the major parties, except for the three supporting the East Java winner (PD, PAN, PKS), immediately asked for meetings with Herman to discuss his charges. Gerindra presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto has been particularly vocal, along with PDI-P's Megawati and Golkar's chair, Vice President Kalla, about the need for the Election Commission to re-open the case and examine the voter lists. Commission III of the Parliament (covering domestic affairs) has summoned the National Police Inspector to discuss the case. In separate meetings this week with Boeing representative (and former Ambassador) Ralph (Skip) Boyce, both Kalla and Megawati made clear that they wanted to make the claims a political issue.

18. (C) Thus far, it is still too early to assess whether some of the mud might rub off on President Yudhoyono who is head of the PD. There is no evidence that he was any way

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involved in any fraud and he maintains a clean image. Consulate Surabaya reports that election fraud in East Java is old news, with voters there paying little attention to this case, or even to the elections. Most voters (50%) are still undecided, claiming there are too many parties and too many candidates to keep track of. That said, observers wonder whether PD and the President might be hurt by Herman's allegations, especially as other parties press claims that Herman's investigation was sidetracked at the national level in order to protect PD.

19. (C) There are other concerns re the elections. An influential ethnic Chinese businessman told DCM on March 18 that he and some colleagues were worried about possible social unrest if voters feel they have been cheated due to widespread allegations of fraud. He and some colleagues were planning to board a plane for Singapore after voting the morning of the elections. He pointed out that now the concern is less about being targeted as ethnic Chinese, and more about resentment from the "have-nots" toward the "haves." We have not heard similar concerns from other Chinese Indonesians.

#### PRESIDENT YUDHOYONO REACTS

10. (SBU) President Yudhoyono held a meeting with ministers and officials on March 19 to discuss the allegations. He asked the national police chief to look into and resolve this issue. The President has underscored his commitment to a free and fair electoral process without fraud and corruption. Other GOI officials have emphasized that the electoral system is fair and allegations of fraud will be fully investigated by the police and the Election Commission.

HUME